

JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations
Technology Acquisition Center
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, New Jersey 07724
2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price delivery order issued under a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Government Wide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).
3. Description of Supplies or Services: VA, Office of Information & Technology, Service Delivery and Engineering, Enterprise Operations (EO), Enterprise Telecommunication Management (ETM) has a requirement to procure brand name Cisco ASR1000 router processors including memory, hard disk drives, interfaces, soft form pluggable modules, and other router subcomponents to meet the Group Encrypted Transport Virtual Private Network (GET VPN) encryption mandated by VA Office of Inspector General security requirements and to support the required for connectivity between EO data centers. Hardware shall be delivered to the following 3 data centers: Austin Information Technology Center (AIRC), Philadelphia Information Technology Center (PITC), and Capital Region Recovery Center (CRRRC) within 60 days of award.
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B), entitled "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized".
5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: Based on market research, as described in section 8 of this document, it was determined that limited competition is available for the required brand name Cisco ASR1000 router processors and associated components among resellers. The PITC, AIRC, and CRRRC currently use Cisco ASR1000 routers, router processors and subcomponents to ensure connectivity between the three data centers. In order to expand the capability of the routers to meet the GET VPN encryption VA mandate, additional router processors are required to be connected to the ASR1000 routers currently in place within the EO data centers. Accordingly, only Cisco ASR1000 router processors and subcomponents are compatible with the Cisco ASR 1000 routers currently in place, specifically the expansion modules and insertable line cards. Cisco ASR 1000 routers are not compatible with any other brands' expansion modules and insertable line cards. The compatibility of these expansion modules and insertable line cards are essential to ensuring that EO is in compliance with the GET VPN encryption mandate. Without the subcomponents, EO would not be able to complete the Storage on Demand project

Cisco Router Processors

meaning there would be no backup replication between data centers. Also, the Get VPN mandate would not be implemented meaning that EO would not be in compliance with the VA GET VPN Mandate requiring encrypted transport of Personally Identifiable Information data over the Wide Area Network.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in the market research section of this document. In accordance with FAR 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), the award notice for this action will be synopsisized and this justification will be posted within 14 days of award on the Federal Business Opportunities Page. In addition, this justification shall be posted to NASA SEWP V GWAC website with the solicitation.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: In order to remove or overcome barriers to competition in future acquisitions for this requirement, the Government will continue to perform market research to determine if there are Cisco ASR1000 router processors available that will integrate with ETM that would enable future requirements to be competed.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted by VA's technical experts in May 2016 by researching other original equipment manufacturer (OEM)'s brand products available on the NASA SEWP V GWAC to determine the availability of router processors capable of meeting VA's requirements. Specifically, Hewlett Packard and Brocade products were reviewed. Although these two alternative OEM's offer router processors, neither is compatible with the Cisco ASR 1000 routers currently in place within EO as described in paragraph 5 above. Additionally, in July 2016, the Contract Specialist conducted additional market research to ascertain the extent of limited competition among resellers. Through use of the Provider Look-up tool on the NASA SEWP V GWAC website, numerous resellers of the required Cisco router processors were identified that could possibly meet VA's needs. Therefore limited competition is anticipated for this action.

9. Other Facts: None